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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to encourage parent participation as schools move toward more inclusive programs for children and youth with disabilities. The guide covers: the importance of "person first" terminology to refer to people with disabilities; what parents want for their children; parent participation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the South Dakota Parent Connection, a parent training and information center; parents as members of the team serving the child; strategies for facilitating team interactions; building trusting relationships with families; school-home communication strategies; and strategies for successful meetings with parents. Also included is a checklist for evaluating a school's approach to building partnerships with parents. Appendices include sample forms for reporting progress, planning a meeting agenda, problem solving, creating a positive student profile, and establishing student goals and objectives. (Contains 14 references.) (DB)

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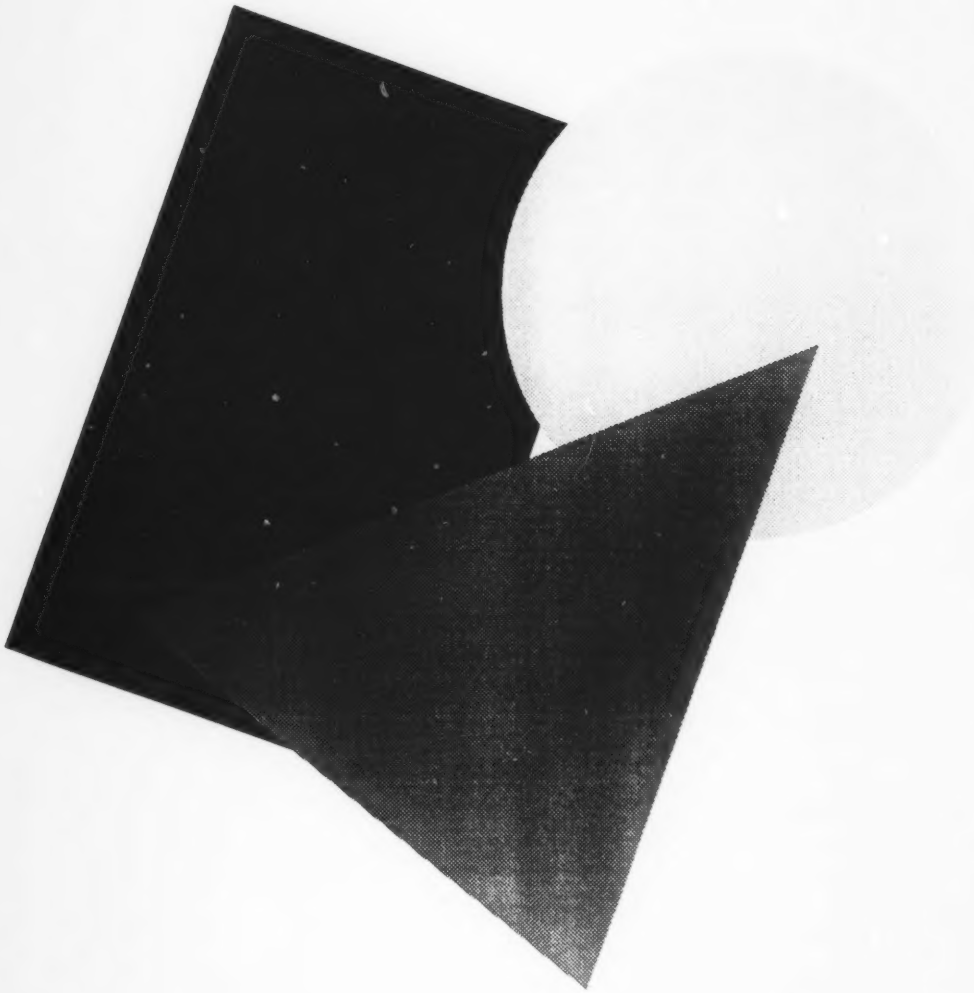
Welcoming Parents As Partners



EC 304573

South Dakota Statewide Systems Change Project
South Dakota Deaf Blind Project

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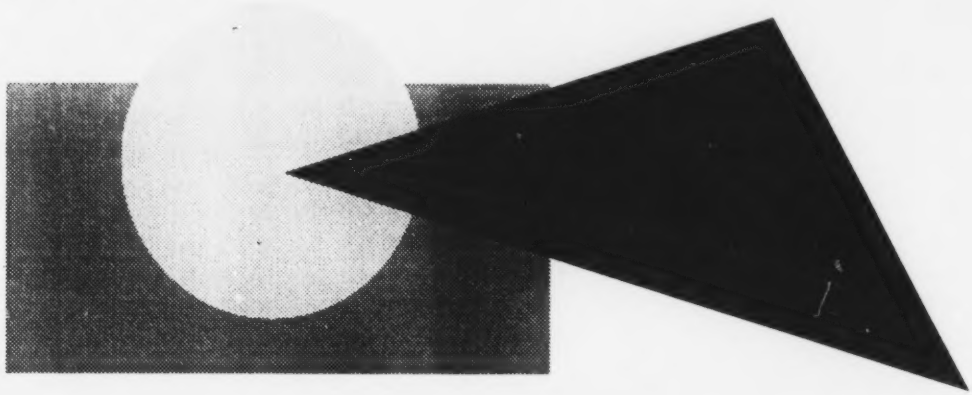
We Believe...

Inclusion is a process,
not a place, service or setting.

Children and youth with disabilities have the right to participate in the same neighborhood schools, classrooms, extracurricular activities and community programs they would attend if they did not have a disability.

Children and youth with disabilities must have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships within their family, school and community.

Collaboration is the key to inclusion. Administrators, special educators, regular educators, parents, and related service staff need to make a commitment to ongoing teamwork.



In South Dakota, the **Statewide Systems Change Project** and the **South Dakota Deaf Blind Project** provides services, consultation, and supports through regionally based educational strategists and parent consultants. Funded by a Federal grant to the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, Office of Special Education, the staff of the project work in close cooperation with state staff to assist local schools in their efforts to build inclusive schools with adequate resources to support children with special needs.

To access assistance of the **South Dakota Statewide Systems Change Project** and the **Deaf Blind Project** contact the Projects' main office at (605) 224-9554*. You may also receive assistance by calling the South Dakota Department of Education, Office of Special Education at (605) 773-3678. Public schools, private schools, parochial schools, parents/families, private service agencies, community organizations, advocacy groups, higher education institutions, and tribal education programs are eligible to request assistance from the project.

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Table of Contents

It's the 'Person First'--Then the Disability 1

A Note To Educators 2

A Checklist for Parent Participation 3

Welcoming Parents as Partners 4

What Parents Want For Their Children with Disabilities 5

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 6

Parent Training and Information Center 7

Parents on the Team 8

Trust 12

Communication 13

Successful Meetings -- How To Make It Happen!! 17

References 19

Appendices 21

- A. Sample Progress Reports 22
- B. Agenda Form 23
- C. Creative Problem Solving 25
  - SODAS 26
- D. Positive Student Profile 27
- E. IEP Inventory/Parent Questionnaire 29
- F. Goals at a Glance 32

It's The 'Person First'
...Then The Disability

Children and youth with disabilities are like everyone else--except they happen to have a disability. The language we use to describe people with disabilities reflects our sensitivity, respect for others and does have an affect on societal attitudes. People-first language refers to the use of language that recognizes an individual's personhood over his/her disability. People-first language places the emphasis on the person. The disability is just one characterstic of the person. Using the appropriate language in all aspects of your work will help to create a mind-set of inclusion of children and youth with disabilities into all aspects of our society.

What is the proper way to describe a student who has a disability?

Consider how you would describe a student who doesn't have a disability. You would use the student's name, where he lives, what he does or what he is interested in.

Why say it differently for a student with disabilities? Every student is made up of many characteristics and no one wants to be identified only by one of their abilities or by their limitations.

"I just want my child included, to fit in. That's what I've always wanted."
South Dakota Parent

Here are a few tips for improving your language related to disabilities:

- Refer to a student's disability only if it is relevant.
- Use the term "disability" rather than "handicap" to refer to a student's disability.
- Say "student with mental retardation" rather than a "mentally retarded student" or "student with a learning disability" rather than "learning disabled student/child".
- Say "student without disabilities" or "typical" rather than "normal" to describe a student without disabilities.
- Say "uses a wheelchair" rather than "confined to a wheelchair" or "wheelchair bound". Mobility or adaptive equipment affords a student freedom and access.
- Choice and independence are important! Let the student do or speak for him/herself as much as possible.
- Emphasize abilities, not limitations.

"Once my son was labeled everyone tried to fix him. He doesn't need to be fixed. He's fine just the way he is. He's a teenager. His disability is only a part of who he is!"
South Dakota Parent

A Note To Educators

Parents, as advocates for their children, are consumers of the special education system. Their role is invaluable in providing the best services possible. Parents are individuals, with their varying strengths and responsibilities. This primer is designed to help you involve parents who at times have felt excluded from the team. Two ways to strengthen the parent/school partnership are to: 1) provide parents with information and opportunities for training; and 2) respect their contributions.

"We need to remember that parents only want what is best for their child."
South Dakota Educator

The relationship between home and school and the roles that parents have been expected to play are varied. In special education, there has been an emphasis upon the critical role of the parent in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. Parents are encouraged to identify what they see as important for their child to learn and participate in the decision making process. Also, parents "follow through" and practice at home the skills being taught at school.

Educators have traditionally been trained to teach and interact with children. Generally little time is spent during teacher training on working with the family of the child. Recognizing how the child's needs may be affected by the family structure, ethnic background or values may not be part of training programs. Understanding how the needs of the child with a disability impact all family members will enhance parent/educator relationships. The activities and resources that follow are based on the premise that families and educators must work together for the common goal of providing the best education for the student.

As you plan which strategies will help you develop collaborative partnership, ask yourself the following questions:

- What practices does my school currently have to make school a welcome place for parents?
- What school practices would I be uncomfortable with if I were a parent at the receiving end?
- What are some activities I do now to encourage positive parent involvement in school and planning teams?
- What activities can I do to strengthen the parent/professional partnership?

A Checklist

For Parent Participation

Is parent participation really valued in your school?
Use the following checklist to determine ways to build effective partnerships with families.

_____ How do teachers and administrators keep parents informed about what is going on?

For Example:

- Newsletters
- Phone calls
- Progress reports
- Conferences

_____ Are parents welcomed into the school?

For Example:
as observers, active team members, volunteers, guest speakers, etc.

_____ Does your school offer information about parent education programs?

For Example: an up-to-date list of resources for child assessment, therapy, tutorials, and enrichment programs.

_____ Are there opportunities for parents and educators to collaborate in:

- services for an individual child?
- program planning, policy formation, and evaluation?
- training and education?
- teambuilding?
- inservice training?

_____ Do educators:

- share complete information?
- demonstrate respect for families?
- honor family choices?
- appreciate cultural differences?

_____ Are there opportunities for educators to learn directly from parents about their perspectives and support needs?

_____ Are meeting times and locations scheduled at times that are convenient for families?

_____ Do preservice and inservice training programs provide instruction in the following areas:

- effective communication skills and methods for working collaboratively with families?
- skills in working collaboratively as a team member with educators and related service personnel?

_____ Are parents invited to participate in inservice and preservice programs?

Adapted from: Shelton, T.E., Jeppson, E.S., & Johnson, B.H. (1989). Family-Centered Care For Children with Special Health Care needs. Bethesda, MD: Association for the Care of Children's Health.
Home-School Partnerships, Bruan and Swap, Wheelock College, Boston, MA, 1986.

Welcoming Parents as Partners

Things We Do Well . . . .

Ways To Improve . . . .

Our Plan . . . .

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What Parents Want For Their Children with Disabilities

ALL PARENTS WANT...

* **The right to have their sons and daughters receive an education.**

* **Continuity in Schooling**
  Parents do not want their children moved from one school or program to another depending on where there is space or funding.

* **Real inclusion in school life**
  Parents want to feel their children have the right to be there, that they are accepted as "regular" members of the school community.

* **Parent inclusion**
  Parents of students with disabilities want to be involved in the school community. School events and activities should include all parents.

* **Appreciation**
  Parents want their sons and daughters appreciated as individuals with talents, limitations, hopes and dreams.

* **Their children to be regarded as contributors** to their school, classrooms and community.

* **Collaboration**
  Working collaboratively with families improves outcomes for students and improves the overall quality of educational programs. Parents want to be involved as equal members of their child's planning team. They know their child from a 24 hour perspective and are the only members of the team with a life long commitment to that student.

Parents can play important roles in policy development and strategic planning. Including parents in these activities sends the clear message that parents are valued members of the school community.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that parents, administrators, teachers and related service personnel share decision making authority in the design of the *Individualized Education Program (IEP)* for children with disabilities. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* establishes the process by which educational decisions for children with disabilities are made. This law reflects the philosophy that excellence in our education system requires a genuine partnership between schools and families. Genuine partnerships occur when families are truly an integral part of the educational process.

Parent participation falls into the following general areas:

Notice of selected proposed actions, inactions or changes in programs or services;

Consent prior to initial evaluation and initial placement in a special education program;

Participation in the referral, evaluation and development, monitoring and revision of a child's Individual Education Plan;

Access of records to inspect and review;

Verification securing independent educational evaluations; and

Oversight initiating and participating in a due process hearing.

Parents have the right to:

Active participation before the IEP meeting;
An opportunity for **meaningful** input;
Joint development of the IEP; and
Continual involvement in the child's educational program.

Parent Training and Information Center

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) provides parents with rights and opportunities to contribute their own unique understanding and perspectives of their children throughout the special education process. Congress enacted legislation to establish one **Parent Training and Information Center** in each state.

Parent Training and Information Centers help parents to:

- understand the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- communicate more effectively with educators, administrators, related service personnel and other professionals;
- better understand the nature of their children's disabilities;
- participate in education decision-making processes with the schools, including development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP); and
- obtain information about the range of options, programs, services, and resources available to their child with a disability.

SOUTH DAKOTA PARENT CONNECTION is a federally funded parent training and information center which serves families of children with disabilities.

South Dakota Parent Connection believes that a child's needs are best met by families who are empowered to be their own advocates. South Dakota Parent Connection's role in empowering families includes:

- A quarterly newsletter, The Circuit, which is distributed free of charge to parents and at a small fee to professionals.
- A resource library which includes videos, audio tapes, and books for loan.
- A toll-free number for providing information and technical assistance to parents.
- Workshops offered in your community or area upon request: Special Education Law, Effective Communication, Coping and Grieving, Individualized Education Plan, Transition to Adulthood, Family Impact–The Other Child, ETC–Embrace the Children (Inclusion), and ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder).

South Dakota Parent Connection
3701 W. 49th St., Suite 200B
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57106
Ph. 605-361-3171 or 1-800-640-4553 Fax 605-361-2928

Parents on the Team

Who Should be on the Team?

Three questions need to be answered:

- *Who has the expertise needed by the team?*
- *Who is affected by the decisions?*
- *Who has an interest in participating?*

"Over the years professionals will come and go. Parents are in it for the 'long haul'. We are experts when it comes to our child."
South Dakota Parent

IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, promotes a team approach to serving children. The process of teaming is an effective strategy for planning and problem solving to meet the individual needs of a child with disabilities. The team members **problem solve, brainstorm ideas for individualized adaptations, identify needs** and **provide each other support**. In order to operate as an effective team, the team membership, including team characteristics and team members' roles should be clearly delineated. Furthermore, the ground rules for the planning team should be well understood.

Over the years, services, providers, and school personnel all will change. The family will remain a constant influence in their child's life. That makes them the most important member on the planning team.

Parents can:

- identify important learning activities for their child;
- identify strengths and needs of their child and family;
- provide insight into the child's abilities in a variety of environments; and
- provide a **vision,** a **dream,** for their child's future.

Team Membership

Teams should include those people affected by the decisions made by the team and those who have information or skills to help the team make better decisions (Thousand & Villa, 1992). The team players are the foundation, and, therefore, the composition of the planning team is very important. Membership must include "key players". Individuals in the following role groups would constitute potential team members:

- Regular class teacher(s)
- Administrator(s)
- Special Educator(s)
- Paraprofessional(s)
- Parent/family
- Student
- Peer(s)
- Related service staff
- Others as identified by the team (nurse, counselor, physician)

Characteristics of Effective Teams:

- Two or more members on the team
- Active parent involvement on the team
- Members with various roles on the team
- A shared framework and unified set of goals
- Members that engage in problem-solving and collaborative activities to reach goals
- Shared resources

A Collaborative Team is 2 or more people working together for a common goal.

Characteristics of Team Members

Effective teams have members who:

- accept and appreciate differences in others
- treat others as individuals
- are flexible
- are active, participating, and productive
- are willing learners
- communicate in constructive ways
- are willing to share work, responsibilities, accolades and failure
- bring problem-solving and collaborative values and skills to the group

"Parents must have the same information that other team members have to make informed decisions if they are to be true team members."

Strategies for Facilitating Team Interactions

Team members must know why they are in existence. The goals and purpose of the team must be discussed by all team members.

- **Select a regularly scheduled team meeting time.**
  For example:
  - the third Tuesday of every month from 3:15-4:15 p.m.
  - or every Thursday morning from 7:45-8:15 a.m.

- **Set group norms**
  For example:
  - meetings will start and end on time;
  - late arrivals and early departures will be frowned upon;
  - other activities will not preempt team meetings

- **Create a physical environment which is conducive to collaboration.**
  For example:
  - create a circle for seating;
  - arrange for privacy;
  - avoid interruptions, etc.

- **Use and follow a written agenda for the team meeting.**
  - An agenda can be generated at the beginning or end of each meeting.
  - Get input from all team members on their concerns or issues to be discussed at the next meeting. (See Appendix)

- **Establish roles for team members to be shared on a rotating basis.**
  - **Facilitator** leads the discussion and keeps it going according to the agenda.
  - **Timekeeper** monitors time use and reminds team members to honor time limits which have been set.
  - **Recorder** takes the minutes of the meeting and is responsible for distribution of the minutes to all team members.
  - **"But" Watcher** listens to others and tries to watch for any negative remarks such as *"That would be a good idea, BUT..."*.
  - **Jargon Buster** clarifies any jargon/acronyms used in the meeting. They might ask, *"I'm sorry, could you clarify that?"*
  - **Keeper of the Rudder** keeps people on task or on topic of discussion.
  - **Equalizer** makes sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate.
  - **Observer** is a person who is impartial and gives the rest of the team feedback.
  - **Empty Chair** is for a person who is absent from the meeting. Place a name tag on a chair for the person who is absent. It reminds other members to always keep in mind what that person' feelings/opinions might be even though they aren't there.
  - **Greeter** makes sure that newcomers feel welcome and get introduced to others.

- **Address agenda items.**
  - Develop a plan if action is required.
  - Set timelines and designate the person who is responsible for activities.
  - Follow through with the action plan.
  - Do what you say you will do!

- **Practice collaborative skills**

  For example:
  - Develop common goals.
  - Share resources.
  - Develop methods of communicating with all team members.
  - Build on your teammate's ideas.
  - Criticize an idea, not a person.
  - Come to meetings prepared.

- **Infuse Creative Problem Solving skills into team interactions.**

  Use a problem solving process to assist in finding solutions to some of the unique challenges presented to the team.
  One you might consider is: SODAS (See Appendix)

"Before a partnership can genuinely exist there must be give-and-take, mutual respect, and something like moral and cultural equality. Both the parent and the professional must attempt to understand the other's point of view."

(Geidman & Roth, 1980)

Adapted from: Villa, Richard A., Thousand Jaqueline S., Stainback W. and Stainback, S., **Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education,** Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. 1992.

Trust

Trust and respect are essential to the development of effective partnerships among parents and school personnel. Building a trusting and respectful relationship with families is an interactive process that involves the mutual sharing of ideas, information and feelings. (Margolis & Brannigan, 1986)

trust: a firm belief or confidence in the honesty, integrity, reliability, justice, etc. of another person or thing
Webster's New World Dictionary

- Accept families as they are.
- Listen carefully and empathetically to the family's message.
- Respect the contributions of the family. Keep confidential the information they share with the team.
- Prepare for all meetings.
- Share information and resources with families.
- Focus on the hopes, dreams, concerns, and needs of family members.
- Keep your word...return calls promptly and share materials as promised.
- Provide materials in the family's native language.
- Use community representatives and/or peers to develop relationships.
- Try to look at situations from the family's point of view.
- Be flexible and sensitive to logistical constraints in working with the family to find viable solutions that are comfortable for the family. Families have other needs and responsibilities.
- Allow the family's expertise to shine.

Adapted from:
"Building Trust with Parents", by H. Margolis and G. Brannigan, 1986, Academic Therapy, 22(1), 71-75.

"Ordinary Families, Special Children: A Systems Approach To Childhood Disability" by M. Seligman and R.B. Darling, 1989.

Communication

Families are all different. Individualize communication, respect preferences, and provide an array of options for participation from which families can choose.

Effective partnerships depend on frequent, open communication. It is essential that everyone involved with the student establish a means to share information. One-to-one contact between parents and staff can lead to the most effective results for children. Parents appreciate receiving information regularly about their child's activities and progress at school.

Develop your own method of **welcoming parents into this partnership**. Determine as a team the best method of exchanging information on a regular basis.

Communication Sharing Strategies

- **Progress Reports**

  Progress reports provide families with feedback about how their child is doing at school. Information can be included about goals and objectives on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or any single subject area. Progress reports can be sent home once a day, once a week, or once every few weeks. (See example in appendix.)

- **Daily Notebook or Log**

  A daily log is a good method of communication for exchanging information and strengthening relationships. Logs provide a record of communication over time that parents may want to keep at the end of a year. The log can inform parents of skills that are being taught in school and of upcoming school and classroom events. Parents may wish to share through log notebooks information helpful to school personnel such as routine care (i.e., eating and toileting habits), special accomplishments and activities at home.

  School personnel may also use this notebook to facilitate the development of friendships. For example, include the names of classmates their child interacts with so that parents can use their names when talking to their son or daughter. With parental permission, students may be encouraged to exchange phone numbers so that they can arrange to get together out of school hours.

- **Newsletters**

  Newsletters are an enjoyable and creative way to provide information and support to families. They can be used to inform parents of new programs, special events and activities at school. Include in your newsletters drawings, quotes, stories from students, a parent column and updates of ongoing school projects. Information such as tips for other families, adapted toys, announcement of workshops and seminars could be included in a newsletter.

- **Handouts**

  Handouts are a way to provide information on a specific topic. A few of the subjects that could be topics for handouts: resources in the community; a bibliography of books about disabilities available in the school or local library; a list of computer programs that children enjoy; or activities students can do at home.

- **Telephone Calls**

  Telephone calls can be a convenient way to share information or to problem solve with families. Arrange for specific times to contact or be contacted by phone. For example, you may want to inform parents that Tuesday afternoons from 3:15 - 4:00 pm is your best time to visit. Asking parents what time would be best for them to receive phone calls will avoid disrupting their schedule.

- **Scrapbook**

  A scrapbook shows the child's growth and progress with examples. You may want to include the child's work, pictures taken of classroom activities, and written notes.

"Share information in a way that provides families encouragement."

"By encouraging parents, listening to their opinions, acting on their suggestions, sharing your expertise, and including them in decision making - you are strengthening them for a lifetime role of advocacy required by their child's circumstances."

(M. Hunt, Personal Communication, May, 1989)

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- **Video**

  A video of the child's accomplishments or of the child participating in a school or classroom activity is another way of sharing information about a students progress with their family.

- **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

  These conferences allow parents and school personnel to get to know each other on a one-to-one basis and discuss the progress of the individual student. Allow enough time to visit so the participants do not feel rushed, frustrated and inconvenienced.

- **Audio Cassettes**

  You may consider this communication option for parents who are not comfortable with written forms, printed information or who have a visual impairment.

- **School/Classroom Visits**

  Encourage parents to visit their son's or daughter's classroom. Welcome parents into school as volunteers, observers, consultants and advisors.

- **Program Awareness Nights**

  A monthly or bi-monthly forum offers the community a look at innovative practices at your school. During the school year, topics such as cooperative learning approaches, critical thinking skills, transition, and inclusive classes may be discussed.

- **Team Meetings**

  In addition to the regular parent/teacher conferences, set up specific, regular meeting times. These may be as often as once per week at the beginning of the year and less frequently later. Give all team members the opportunity to provide you with a list of their questions or issues prior to the meeting. This will assist in making your meeting much more efficient as everyone will be prepared.

"As often as possible, put yourself in the students' or parents' shoes."

- **Positive Student Profile**

  The Positive Student Profile enables parents to provide the team with a "snapshot" of their child, focusing on the child's strengths and capabilities. The form also reflects information concerning the child's educational needs, long-range goals, and the types of supports required for the student to succeed. (See example in appendix.)

- **Goals-At-A-Glance**

  This form provides a format for the parent to present the major goals they feel the Individual Education Plan (IEP) should address. Another use of this form is to provide a shortened version of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the classroom teacher, which can be updated as necessary to reflect the students most current needs.

- **Home Visits**

  Home visits may be one option preferred by some families. Make home visits only if they are scheduled with the family ahead of time. When considering home visits, it is particularly important to recognize that some parents may find home visits intrusive.

- **IEP Inventory**

  The Individual Education Plan (IEP) inventory is to be filled out prior to and shared in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting. (See appendix.) This inventory helps parents identify their expectations for their child.

"Be honest . . . remember that every negative can be stated positively, hope provides parents with significant amounts of motivation."

Successful Meetings

How to Make It Happen!

Consider the following strategies for successful meetings with parents...

- Send notification of meetings early to team members. **Offer parents choices for the date, time, and location of the meeting.**

- Make your first interaction with the family a **positive** one.

- **The initial contact with the family should be designed to build trust between the school and the family.** Too often the first time parents hear from the school is when the problem has developed, which may set up an antagonistic environment.

- **Plan a comfortable physical environment for meeting.** Create a circle to promote face-to-face interaction.

- **Arrange to have no interruptions during the scheduled meeting time.** If there is an emergency interruption, tell the family members they can have additional time, or reschedule the meeting.

- **Provide records and reports to the families before the meeting.** Offer to review technical reports prior to the meeting so they can come to the meeting prepared.

WELCOME family members and other members of the team to the table. Let each person know that they are valued members of the team and their involvement is appreciated. Hospitality is important!

- **Plan an agenda which includes realistic time limits.**

- **Open the meeting with a positive topic.** Compliment the student's strengths and capabilities or tell an amusing story about something the student might have said or done recently.

- **Let the family begin the meeting if they choose to.** Listen carefully to what is being said and ask clarification questions.

- **Acknowledge the family's expertise** about the child's interest, behaviors, aptitudes, history, preferences and learning styles.

- **Use clear language. Avoid jargon or acronyms.**

- **Encourage parents to invite a family member, friend or advocate to meetings.** Parents may invite whomever they think may be helpful.

"I know the day will come when I will look forward to our son's IEP meeting. It will be the time each year when together, as a team, we share his accomplishments and anticipate his future!"

South Dakota Parent

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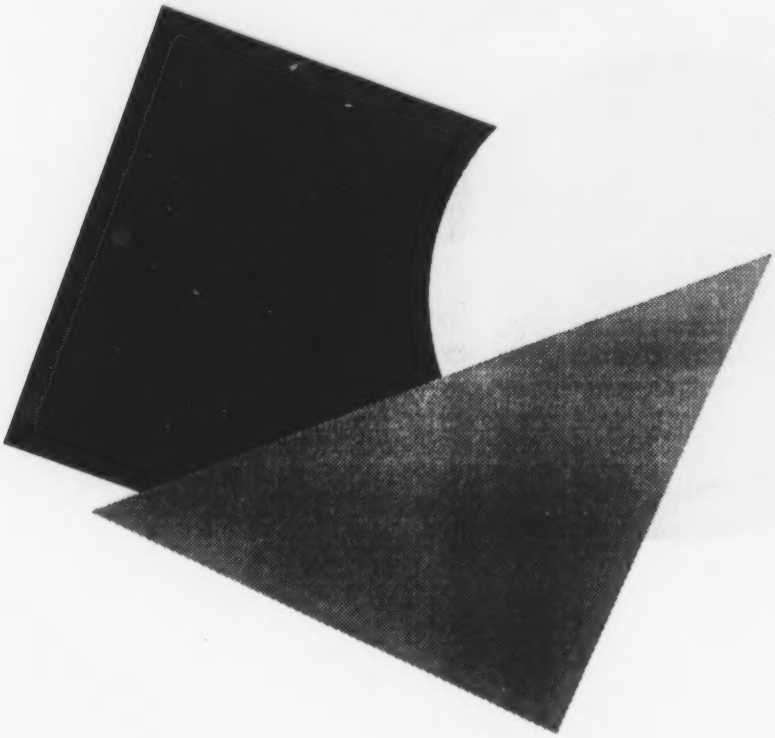
Appendices



A. Sample Progress Reports
B. Agenda Form
C. Creative Problem Solving
   SODAS
D. Positive Student Profile
E. IEP Inventory/Parent Questionnaire
F. Goals at a Glance

A. SAMPLE -- Progress Report

Figure #1

About Today

Name: _____ Date: _____

I did really well today on: _____

I am still working hard on: _____

Teacher signature: _____

Parent signature: _____

Figure #2

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN	PERIODIC PROGRESS REVIEW

IEP DATE _____ IEP REVIEW DATE _____ PAGE ___ OF ___

RATE THE PROGRESS WHICH HAS OCCURRED FOR EACH GOAL AND OBJECTIVE
How is the learner's performance different at this time from the time of the writing of the IEP?

Goal #. Objective #. Completion Date	PROGRESS REVIEWS	REVIEWER

B. Team Meeting Agenda

Team Meeting for: _____ Date: _____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Team Members Present:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Roles:	For This Meeting:	For Next Meeting:
Facilitator		
Recorder		
Timekeeper		

Agenda Items for this meeting: Time Limit

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Agenda Items for next meeting:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Minutes:

Assigned Tasks:

Person(s) Responsible	Task	Completed by:

Creative Problem Solving

No one can solve your day to day challenges except YOUR OWN TEAM! Use a problem solving process to assist in finding solutions to some of the more unique challenges. By using a process, it forces team members to work through the entire problem and toward a more long lasting approach. There are many creative problem solving "processes".

SODAS is a problem solving "process" you might consider.

S Situation (Define the problem.)

Do some Fact Finding at the point by thinking about the following:

- Who is or is not affected?
- What is or is not happening?
- When does or doesn't it occur?
- Where does or doesn't it occur?
- Why does or doesn't it occur?
- How does or doesn't it happen?

O Option

This is the brainstorming part of the creative problem solving process. DO NOT JUDGE the ideas at this point. Try to generate as many ideas as possible, REGARDLESS how silly they might seem. Use phrases or questions to help generate ideas, such as:

- "In What Ways Might We . . . .?"
- "What If There Were No Obstacles . . . . ?"
- "Who Else Might Have Ideas . . . . ?"
- "If I Had a Magic Wand I Would . . . . ?"

D Disadvantages

Now, take a look at the options and select those that the team feels are possibilities. What might the DISADVANTAGES be if you implement the option? List them on one side of the paper.

A Advantages

Using the same selected options as above take a look at the ADVANTAGES of implementing the option. List them along side of the disadvantages.

S Solution

By looking at the disadvantages and advantages begin to form your solution to the situation. Several of the options might be combined into the solution.

SODAS

SITUATION (Define the problem)

_____

_____

_____

OPTIONS:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

DISADVANTAGES:

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

ADAVANTAGES:

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

SOLUTION:

If you agree to a solution, MAKE A PLAN.
(Who will do what, when? How will you know if the plan is working?)

D. Positive Student Profile

This form is to be filled out by the parent to provide a "snapshot" of your child which should be reflected in his/her IEP.

Place photo here.

1. Who is _____? (describe your child, including information such as place in family, personality, likes and dislikes.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What are _____'s strengths? (Highlight all areas in which your child does well, including educational and social environments.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What are _____'s successess? (List all successes, no matter how small.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What are _____'s greatest challenges? (List the areas in which your child has the greatest difficulties.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What supports are needed for _____? (List supports that will help your child achieve his/her potential.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What are our dreams for _____? (Describe your vision for your child's future, including both short-term and long-term goals.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Other helpful information. (List any pertinent information, including health care needs, that has not been detailed elsewhere on this form.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

IEP Inventory

E. Parent Questionnaire

Family members fill out the inventory prior to and share it with team members at the IEP meeting.

Student Name _____ Age _____

Parent Name _____

Address _____

List three activities your child takes part in with your family. _____

_____

_____

_____

How extensively is your child involved in these activities? _____

_____

Is your child able to entertain him/herself alone? _____

What recreational activities can be implemented at school to improve your child's quality of life?

_____

_____

List your child's three favorite stories. _____

_____

_____

_____

What reading skills do you see as part of your child's educational plan (listening to stories, identifying story characters, recognizing simple words, sounding out words, reading words in context, recognizing words around the community)?

_____

_____

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

List three math skills your child demonstrates at home (one-to-one correspondence counting, value of money, making change, telling time, measuring, using a calculator, identifying numerals, writing numerals, adding and subtracting).

_____

_____

_____

Using the examples from number seven, what math skills would you like to see your child acquire this year?

_____

_____

Describe your child's fine motor skills (button, snap, zip, stringing beads, using writing instruments, tie shoes, coloring, cutting, and pasting). How can the school improve these skills?

_____

_____

Describe your child's communication skills (speaks in sentences, phrases, or single words, uses sign language, noncommunicative, easily understood).

_____

_____

_____

Is your child more comfortable communicating with certain family members or peers than others?

Please describe. _____

_____

_____

Does your child maintain eye contact during communication? _____

_____

Is your child able to follow oral directions? A two-step direction? _____

_____

List three ways you'd like to see your child's language skills improved. _____

_____

_____

List three social activities you'd like to see your child take part in. _____

_____

_____

Are there any other skills or activities not noted that you would like your child to learn? _____

_____

_____

List three ways you would like to be contacted regarding school information (post cards, phone, weekly diary, daily log).

_____

_____

_____

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F. Goals-At-A-Glance

This form is to be filled out by the parent and shared with the team. Under each heading below, enter a few major goals that you feel the IEP should address.

Academic:

Social/Emotional/Behavioral:

Communication:

Daily Living:

Transition to Adulthood (No later than age 14):

Other: